

# First Annual Report of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council

*Submitted to the First Regular Session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature  
February 2003*



Ms. Molly Feeney and Representative Rosaire Paradis  
Legislative Youth Advisory Council Co-Chairs

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MR. TREVOR BRAGDON

MR. PAUL BRUNETTI

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Ms. BRITNEY DUPEE

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MS. HANNAH PENNINGTON

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*\*\*Denotes persons who are no longer members of the Council, as of the date of this report, due to resignation or the expiration of their term.*

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## Executive Summary

This is the first annual report of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council is a permanent advisory council created in statute by Public Law of 2001, chapter 436, Part PPPP.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Council is to advise the Legislature and its Committees on issues related to youth. The Council, which is comprised of three legislative members and 18 youth members, is directed to meet at least 8 times each year, to conduct at least 2 public hearings each year and to conduct an annual seminar each August on leadership, government and the Legislature, and to report annually to the Legislature. The Council is required to report annually to the Legislature and is authorized by law to submit legislation.



*Former Legislative Chair, Representative Michael Quint, convenes the first meeting of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council on August 15, 2002*

The legislation creating the Council took effect on July 1, 2002. Although the Council identified and discussed a wide range of issues important to youth during its first meetings, it quickly identified the issue of alcohol and drug abuse prevention among youth as the issue of highest priority. During the six meetings and 2 public hearings the Council held during its first six months of existence, the Council heard from a wide range of people involved in all aspects of the alcohol and drug abuse prevention system in Maine, including state and local program managers and service providers, the Maine Drug Court, youth in treatment programs and

youth representatives to the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Peer Leadership Conference. The Council also received a substantial amount of printed material from a number of sources pertaining to the delivery and effectiveness of youth-related alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs and services.

Although the Council will continue to study a wide range of issues important to youth in 2003, this first annual report of the Council includes several recommendations to enhance youth input at the state level into the planning and evaluation of programs affecting youth, to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse Survey conducted biennially by the Office of Substance Abuse and to amend the State's Learning Results to include more options on matters pertaining to alcohol and substance abuse among youth. Those findings and recommendations, which are discussed in more detail in this report, are:

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<sup>1</sup> Codified as 3 MRSA, §168-A.

## ***Recommendations***

- *That the Legislature initiate a process that will lead to the creation of a Youth Advisory Committee within the Executive Branch to serve as a resource for state agencies charged with developing, implementing or enforcing programs, policies or laws that apply specifically to youth. The Council further recommends that the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse, the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of Education be tasked with developing recommendations on the structure, function and operations of that Committee and that those agencies jointly report their recommendations to the Council in the fall of 2003.*
- *That the Council create a 3-member subcommittee of youth members of the Council to begin immediately to work with OSA, the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of Education on matters pertaining to youth input into agency policy making on matters affecting youth and to assist in the development of the Youth Advisory Committee.*
- *That the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for collecting information on drug and alcohol use among youth, including a review of Washington State's "Healthy Youth Survey", and report back to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in the fall of 2003 with recommendations on the following issues:*
  1. *Options to the existing MYDAUS survey tool that include a more appropriate survey tool and a methodology that is based on random sampling methodology that provides statistically valid data at the state level and within participating local school districts; and*
  2. *Expanding the target population of the survey to include not only students who attend school, but also home-schooled students and youth who attend school infrequently or have dropped out of school.*
- *That the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for preparing and training teachers and others who administer the MYDAUS survey in the schools to ensure that all persons administering the survey are adequately prepared to perform that task. The Council also recommends that the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse, the Commissioner of Education and appropriate representatives of local school districts develop a plan for training and coordinating the administration of the 2004 MYDAUS survey, or any successor survey, and present that plan to the Council in the fall of 2003.*
- *That the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for awarding grants for youth-related drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and services to ensure that those grants are being awarded to programs with the highest demonstrated level of effectiveness and in those areas of the state having the highest demonstrated need. The Council further recommends that the Office*

*report the findings of its review of those matters to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in the fall of 2003.*

- *That the Office of Substance Abuse continue to work with the Council in collecting information on prevention providers and in developing a process to evaluate the effectiveness of those prevention programs.*
- *That the Legislature amend the laws governing the statewide system of learning results to incorporate the principles of those alcohol and drug use policies pertaining to student athletes proposed by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project within the content standard pertaining to health and physical education. We further recommend that the code of conduct for student athletes incorporated into the learning results be substantially similar to the code of conduct for student athletes proposed by Youth Empowerment Project.*
- *That the Department of Education investigate the Project ALERT program, or other similar prevention programs, as an option to the DARE program in Maine schools. A teacher-training program is an important part of any option considered by the Department. The Council further recommends that such options be available statewide and available through the Learning Results as an alternative to the "Drug Abuse Resistance Education" (DARE) program offered through the Maine State Police.*
- *That the Legislature quickly adopt emergency legislation proposed by the Council to add a second Senate member to the Council and to adjust the terms of the existing youth members to provide greater consistency in membership and simplicity in the appointment process.*

## **History and description of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council was created by the 120<sup>th</sup> Legislature through the enactment of Public Laws of 2001, chapter 436, Part PPPP. The law creating the Council is derived from LD 1779, *An Act to Create the Legislative Youth Advisory Council*, which was sponsored by Representative Michael Quint and unanimously endorsed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on May 3, 2001. The law creating the Council took effect on July 1, 2002, and the Council subsequently held their first meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup> and a second meeting on September 20, 2002.

The council consists of three legislators and 18 youth members from around the State. Ten of those members, including one member of the Senate, are appointed by the President of the Senate and 11 members, including two members of the House of Representatives, are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Two of the youth members are home-schooled, six attend Maine colleges and ten are Maine high school students.

The first appointed member of the House serves as the Legislative Chair and the Council is directed by law to elect one of the appointed youth members as the Youth Co-Chair. Representative Michael Quint, being the first appointed member of the House, is the Legislative Chair of the Council. The other Legislative members are Representative Carol Weston and Senator Lynn Bromley. At their first meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the Council elected Ms. Molly Feeney, of Knox, as the Youth Co-Chair. Ms. Feeney is a member of groups involved in civil right and peer mediation and is a member of her high school's Student Advisory Council.

Appointments to the Council are for a term of two years, except that the initial appointments were staggered so that only half of the Council's membership will expire each year. Members whose terms have expired may be reappointed, provided they are still eligible under the age and schooling criteria set forth in the law. A table summarizing the current membership of the Council is included as an appendix to this report.

The purposes of the Council, as set forth in the law, are to advise the Legislature on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and policy matters related to youth, advise the joint standing committees and study commissions, committees and task forces on issues related to youth, conduct an annual seminar each August on leadership, government and the Legislature, and to report annually to the Legislature. The Council is authorized to submit legislation and requires that the Council meet at least 6 times per year and conduct 2 public hearings per year on issues of importance to youth.

The law also directs the Council to examine issues of importance to youth, including, but not limited to, education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in

municipal government and State Government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, homelessness and youth access to services on a municipal and statewide basis.

## **Summary of Meetings**

The Council's first meeting, on August 15, 2002, served as both its organizational meeting and as the Council's first annual seminar on leadership, government and the Legislature. The Council was honored at their first meeting with the opportunity to discuss a broad range of issues with leaders of the three branches of State Government, including Speaker of the House, Michael Saxl, the Chief of Staff of the President of the Senate, Governor Angus King, Attorney General Steven Rowe, Chief Justice Leigh Saufley and House majority Leader Patrick Colwell. The Council members were also provided the opportunity to tour the House and Senate Chambers as the guests of the Clerk of the House, Millicent McFarland, and the Secretary of the Senate, Pamela Cahill.

The Council's second meeting, on September 20, 2002, focused on issues relating to the delivery and effectiveness of alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs for youth. At that meeting, the Council met with four panels comprised of individuals from the State's Juvenile Drug Courts, the State Office of Substance Abuse, alcohol and drug abuse treatment service providers and representatives of the Youth Empowerment and Policy Group.

The Council also conducted public hearings on Friday, October 18, 2002 in Augusta and on Thursday, November 14, 2002 in Bangor. Both public hearings focused on soliciting public opinion on issues relating to youth-related alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs and services.

The Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council is believed to be the first Council of its kind in the country. Although many states, including Maine, have advisory boards and commissions that include youth members, Maine is apparently the first, and still the

only, state to have created a youth council that has its own statutory authority to introduce legislation directly to the Legislature. In that sense, this Council represents an historic step on the part of the Maine Legislature to give the youth of the State a direct role in setting the policy discussion with respect to issues of importance to youth. The current members of the Council recognize the significance of this charge, and are committed to fulfilling their obligation to the Legislature and to serving the Legislature as a continuing resource on youth issues.



*Legislative Youth Advisory Council  
members Hannah Pennington, Molly  
Feeney and then Representative Carol  
Weston*

As noted in the previous section, the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives are charged with appointing the members of the Council. The current youth members of the Council range from 15 to 21 years of age and were selected from communities throughout the state. Two of the youth members are home schooled, six attend Maine colleges and technical schools and ten are Maine high school students.

Legislative members for the term of the 120th Legislature include Representative Michael Quint, who serves as the Legislative Chair of the Council, Representative Carol Weston, and Senator Lynn Bromley. As required by statute, the Council also elected a youth Co-Chair from among its appointed members at its first meeting. The Youth Co-Chair elected this year is Ms. Molly Feeney, a 16-year-old junior from Mt. View High School in Thorndike. Ms. Feeney is involved in field hockey, indoor and outdoor track, is a member of the Civil Rights Team, the Natural Helpers and the Peer Mediators as well as being a member of the Student Advisory Council. Ms. Feeney is deeply concerned about issues facing Maine youth.

***First Meetings,*** August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002

The first meetings of the Youth Advisory Council were held on August 14th and 15th and consisted of an orientation, several business meetings and the convening of the first annual seminar on leadership, government and the Legislature.

The first day of the meeting was held at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro, Maine. Since it was anticipated that few of the members would know one another initially, a decision was made prior to the first meeting to include an all-day orientation session as part of the first meeting. The orientation session was facilitated by the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School and was extraordinarily successful in building strong relationships among the Council members, in assisting them in better understanding the purposes of the Council, in learning about problem solving methods, leadership techniques and in beginning the process of identifying issues that were of concern to them.



*Lunch break at the Criminal Justice Academy meeting in August*

After the orientation sessions, the Council was pleased to host an informal dinner later in the day for a wide range of invited leaders of government. Those who attended the dinner event included members and representative of Legislative leadership, members of the Children's Cabinet, the Dean of the Muskie School of Public Service and other state officials.

Following the informal dinner, the Council reconvened to continue their discussion on issues that affect Maine youth.

*August 15, 2002*

The second day was held at the State Capitol in Augusta. The meetings began with the Council receiving tours of the House and Senate Chambers from the Clerk of the House, Millicent McFarland and the Senate Secretary, Pamela Cahill. Following those tours of the House and Senate Chambers, the Council convened its first business meeting at 9am in the Appropriations Committee room of the State House. The first votes of the Council were to elect Ms. Feeney as Youth Co-Chair and to adopt their Committee Rules of Procedure.

Following those votes, the Council resumed its discussion of the issues identified the previous day as key issues for youth in the State. That discussion included an opportunity to discuss the role of the press in the policy process with Selena Ricks, a reporter with the Portland Press Herald, and Greg Lagerquist, an anchor and reporter with WGME-TV.



*State Supreme Court Justice Leigh Saufley discussing issues with the Council*

At noon, the Council hosted a luncheon in the Hall of Flags for members of the Legislature, Constitutional Officers and others. Following lunch, the Council conducted its first press conference and announced the formation of the Council. The Council then reconvened to hear comments from several invited leaders of State government. Those leaders included Governor Angus King, Attorney General Steven Rowe, State Supreme Court Justice Leigh Saufley, Speaker of the House Mike Saxl and House Majority Leader Patrick Colwell. Those leaders were unanimous in their support for the Youth Advisory Council and in reiterating its importance in involving youth in the Legislative process. This meeting

offered a significant opportunity for youth members of the Council to listen to and speak with significant leaders from all three branches of Maine government.

After a short recess the Council returned to their discussion of issues. Co-Chair Feeney suggested that due to council members concern about substance abuse for Maine youth, the group might begin to gather information about the effectiveness and delivery of alcohol and substance abuse prevention programs focused on youth. This issue has subsequently become the issue of highest priority for the Council, and forms the basis for many of its recommendations in this report.

### ***Second Meeting, September 20, 2002***

The second meeting of the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council was held at the State House on September 20, 2002. Several preliminary issues were discussed first, including a brief review of the enabling legislation of the Council, a review of the terms

of the appointed members and a review of the Freedom of Access laws and laws pertaining to their roles as members of a public entity. This latter issue derived from the interest in some members of the Council in utilizing electronic media, such as email and the Internet, to communicate with youth. The Council believes that the Internet is an important means of communication for many youth and that it should play a key role in outreach and dissemination of their work. The Council considered creating a subcommittee to begin the planning for this effort, but chose not to move forward with that until more information was available about the resources required for such an effort and the technical issues resolved with respect to creating and maintaining a permanent Internet presence were better understood.

The following panel discussions comprised the majority of the discussion for the remainder of the day.

*Panel 1: Maine Drug Court Representatives*

Early in its discussions, the Council made a decision to focus its work in 2002 on issues relating to alcohol and substance abuse among youth. For that reason, the Council focused its first series of panel discussions on the scope of the substance abuse problem for Maine youth and prevention and intervention efforts across the state.

The first panel included representatives of the Maine Juvenile Drug Court. The panel consisted of Justice Keith Powers, Jane Clark, Manager of the Juvenile Drug Court program, Linda Frazier of the Office of Substance Abuse, Brian McDougal, a juvenile probation officer and Christine Thibeault, a prosecutor from the District Attorney's office.

Justice Powers informed the committee that the mission of Maine's six drug courts is to improve the quality of life for youth through substance abuse rehabilitation, random drug testing and observed accountability. He discussed the Court's process of meeting weekly with participating youth, their parents and guardians to discuss their successes and problems. Youth are rewarded for positive behavior with movie and concert tickets, praise and positive reinforcement. Negative behavior and substance abuse can result in termination from the program and incarceration for up to 7 days in a youth center.

Jane Clark, Director of the Juvenile Drug Court discussed the referral process for youth. Drug court treatment managers accept referrals from the district attorney, the youth center, parents, physicians, schools and therapists. Each youth receives a substance abuse and mental health evaluation that leads to the development of an individual treatment plan. Drug Court staff ensures that medical care is provided, drug testing in some cases and home visits to youth and their families.

Brian McDougal stated that the role of the probation officer is to ensure the public safety of the community and the youth. They oversee the rehabilitation plan for the young person and create a community of supporters.

Christine Thibeault represented her position as prosecutor from the District Attorneys office as one who represents the concerns of the community in the rehabilitation process. She noted that rehabilitation rarely takes place in jail and stressed the strong correlation between substance abuse and criminal activity. Her experience is that drug courts were a significant step in the right direction. She feels that the care and guidance offered to youth has helped them become concerned members of their community and was impressed with how that work strengthened families.

*Panel 2: The Maine State Office of Substance Abuse*

The second panel consisted of representatives of the State Office of Substance Abuse and included Kim Johnson, Director, Office of Substance Abuse, and William Lowenstein, Linda Williams and Joanne Ogdon.

The presentation from OSA included an overview of research conducted by the Office on a wide range of issues relating to alcohol and drug abuse prevention. The Office has presented the following information as key points in their discussion:

- Research shows that the State must reduce risk factors, increase protective factors (assets) and use multiple strategies in multiple domains;
- OSA helps communities in prevention efforts by funding 70 grants (average \$35k); providing statewide and regional training for prevention; initiating statewide programs/campaigns such as “sticker shock”, Think Again, Parent Media Campaign; brochures/pamphlets and a lending library;
- OSA has just received a \$1million federal grant to fund 15-30 community coalitions with up to \$153k starting in January, 2003;
- Funding decisions are data driven using information from school surveys, treatment data, and needs assessment and household surveys.
- Results of OSA research suggest that, by grade 12, drug use by youth is: 80% Alcohol, 60% marijuana and tobacco, and 25% prescription drugs.

*Panel 3: Day One Representatives*

The third panel consisted of representatives of Day One, a drug and alcohol treatment provider in Portland. The panel included representatives of Day One, plus several youths in the Day One recovery program. This panel provided very compelling testimony from three youth in a Day One residential recovery program. One girl and two boys shared the stories of their addiction and their work at recovery.

The Council heard testimony from one youth who grew up in a rural community and didn't know his father. His mother suffered from severe rheumatoid arthritis. He stated that he never felt like he fit in. He first got involved with drugs with his peers and was soon stealing prescription pain pills from his mother. He was in and out of jail and flunked out of the drug court program. He had been clean and sober for nine months at Day One and knew that sobriety would be a life long challenge for him. He advocated for more “detox” programs for youth.

The Council also heard from a teenage girl from a “middle class” family. Her father was a social worker and her mother died while the girl was in her early teens. She became involved in drugs at an early age in her rural community and mentioned that the DARE program actually gave her an early education of what drugs were available. She was diagnosed with clinical depression, was hospitalized three times and her drug use dramatically increased during her grief and depression. She has never been involved with the law. Her brother is also heavily involved with drugs. She was very grateful for the support of the Day One program and felt it was saving her life.

The Council also heard from another young man who told of his long involvement with drugs and alcohol. He told the Council that drugs and alcohol were “the thing to do” in his community. He indicated that it had taken him a long time to realize that he was different from his friends because they could stop and he couldn’t. He had several



*Council members listen to panel discussions in September.*

brushes with the law and was eventually given a choice by the Courts to either attend Day One or be sentenced to prison. He chose to attend Day One and, at the time he testified before the Council, had been in the program for nine months. He spoke highly of Day One’s services including education, life skills, and how to live a structured life. He felt he was truly learning to take responsibility for and dealing with his issues.

Council members considered this to be the most compelling panel of the day. They felt this authentic testimony was the most informative and expressed concern that there be more youth centered detox and treatment programs offered throughout the state. They also suggested that the Office of Substance Abuse

should find a way to get information from these young people as they decide how to distribute their funds.

#### *Panel 4: Youth Policy and Empowerment Project*

The fourth panel consisted of several youth who are members of the Youth Policy and Empowerment project, a project of the Maine Youth Voices, administered by the AdCare Educational Institute. Their project is funded through the Office of Substance Abuse with a federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The purpose of the program is to actively involve youth in reducing underage drinking in their communities.

The Youth Voices groups participate in several trainings each year and meet regularly in their communities. Their mission is ultimately to change the norms in their community regarding underage drinking.

This particular group studied school drug and alcohol policies and contracts for athletes. They worked with a model developed by the Center for Global Ethics in Camden. The project members explained their process and said they felt they had come up with a good model policy for athletes. Their challenge was to implement it in schools and get the attention of superintendents.

***Third Meeting, October 18, 2002***

The third meeting of the Council consisted of a brief morning discussion of the key issues identified at its earlier meetings, followed by morning and afternoon public hearings. During its morning public hearing, the Council heard testimony from approximately 20 individuals involved in all aspect of alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs. A large amount of written material was also provided to the Council on those issues.

The afternoon session of the public hearing utilized the Department of Education's interactive audio-visual distance learning sites (the ATM system) to solicit input from students and members of the public from locations outside of Augusta. The ATM system was linked to Belfast High School and Cape Elizabeth High School and provided the Council with the opportunity to receive public testimony from those locations. The Council received testimony from individuals at both locations. Testimony during the afternoon also focused on the effectiveness and delivery of alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs related to youth.

***Fourth Meeting, November 14, 2002***

The Council's November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting included a business meeting from 11 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. and an afternoon and evening public hearing. The meeting was held at the Bangor Civic Center in conjunction with the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Peer Leadership Conference. The Council scheduled its November meeting to coincide with the Peer Leadership

Conference to allow the several hundred youths from around the state who attend that conference the opportunity to provide public testimony to the Council on issues pertaining to alcohol and substance abuse prevention programs and services.



*Council member Barrett Littlefield listens to testimony*

During the public hearings, the Council heard testimony from a number of youths and from other interested members of the public.

In addition to the hearing, the Council also offered conference attendees and the public the opportunity to complete a short survey in which they were asked to indicate their priorities among a number of youth-

related issues previously identified by the Council as issues of significant importance to youth.<sup>2</sup> The survey also asked whether or not the person completing the survey had taken the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS) administered biennially by the Office of Substance Abuse and, if they had taken that survey, whether or not they thought it was helpful.

The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis compiled the survey responses on behalf of the Council (see Appendices for the survey summary) and found that the issues identified as the highest priority were, by a large margin, the issues of 1) alcohol and drug abuse, 2) drinking and driving, 3) teen pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases and 4) child abuse. The remaining issues included on the survey were identified as priorities by a small percentage of survey takers, and many survey takers also listed other issues that they thought were important.

Sixty-seven respondents indicated that they had taken the MYDAUS survey, while 61 indicated they had not taken the MYDAUS survey and 49 indicated they had never heard of the MYDAUS survey. Of those 67 who said they had taken the MYDAUS survey, 12 said the survey was "very useful", 36 said it was "somewhat useful" and 23 said it was "not very useful".

***Fifth Meeting, December 2, 2002***

The Council's fifth and final meeting of 2002 was held in Augusta on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The purpose of this meeting was to develop the Council's findings and recommendations for inclusion in this report. Prior to developing those findings and recommendations, the Council had a discussion with the Secretary of State, Dan Gwadosky, on a number of issues, which the Secretary felt, were important and likely to be considered by the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature in 2003. Secretary Gwadosky gave a compelling presentation on national and state statistics on youth fatalities in automobile crashes, the elements that appear to increase risks for youth drivers, teen crash statistics and an overview of Maine laws pertaining to youth drivers. A copy of the PowerPoint slides used by Secretary Gwadosky in his presentation is included as an appendix to this report.

Secretary Gwadosky also described several issues that may be considered by the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature and asked the Council for some comments on those issues. The issues identified were 1) raising the driving age, 2) a driving curfew, 3) a 6 month waiting period after obtaining a permit and applying for a road test, 4) a 6 month "no passenger" period and 5) mandatory suspensions for provisional license violations.



*Council member Nathanael Yellis  
listens to testimony*

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the survey tool designed by the Council and a memo from the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis summarizing the survey results is included in the appendices of this report.

The Council greatly appreciated the Secretary's presentation and interest in soliciting the views of the Council. After discussing those issues with the Secretary, the Council expressed its general view that the best opportunity to make changes in the youth driving laws intended to improve safety is during the permit period, rather than placing additional driving restrictions on youths operating under a provisional license. The Council viewed difficulty with enforcement as the key reason for targeting the permit period for changes rather than increasing restrictions on youth licenses.

Following Secretary Gwadosky's presentation, the Council had a discussion with Lynn Davey, Ph.D., KIDS COUNT Director for the Maine Children's Alliance and Rebecca Matusovich with the Office of Substance Abuse on the MYDAUS survey, sampling statistics, survey methodology and some discussion about the manner in which other states survey youth populations to obtain information about alcohol and substance abuse patterns.

Following those discussions, the Council discussed and expanded upon its findings and recommendations that can be found in this report.

***Sixth Meeting, January 14, 2003***

The Council's first meeting in the New Year began with many changes. Co-Chair Molly Feeney welcomed the newly appointed legislative members of the Council, Representative Rosaire Paradis, who will serve as the Legislative chair of the Council, Representative Mary Ellen Ledwin and Senator Lynn Bromley. The Council also welcomed two newly appointed youth members, Keith Rollins of Cheverus High School and Britney Dupee of Portland High School.

The Council was pleased to meet with the new legislative leadership and Governor Baldacci during his first official week in office. Speaker of the House, Representative Patrick Colwell, spoke to the Council and stressed the need for youth involvement in state government. He also told the Council that he believed the House of Representatives will take the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council seriously and that the opinion of the Council will be important this session in such issues as driving, substance abuse, education and other issues which impact young people. He emphasized that his door was always open and encouraged an open line of communication.

Senate President Beverly Daggett also addressed the Council and praised the Council members for their interest and involvement in government. She noted that the Governor Baldacci's had called for a youth summit in his inaugural speech and stated that she believed he would have the full support of the Legislature in that initiative. She was pleased



*Senate President  
Beverly Daggett  
addresses the Council  
in January 2003*

that the Council had taken up the issue of substance abuse as their first concern. She had read the draft of the annual report and was impressed with the depth of knowledge that the Council had gained. She suggested that the Council consider a workshop presentation on substance abuse with legislative committees. President Daggett also suggested that the Council consider an amendment in their annual report to add one more senate member to the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Co-Chair Molly Feeney welcomed Governor John Baldacci who noted that this was the first committee that he had met with as Governor. He praised the Legislative Youth Council for its work and emphasized the importance of everyone working together on youth issues. He spoke of the early planning for a youth summit and noted that he



*Governor John Baldacci addresses the Council in January 2003*

shared the Council's concern about the lack of jobs and opportunity for young people who want to stay in Maine. He suggested that the state consider new ideas such as student loan forgiveness for youth who come back to work in Maine. He also was very troubled about substance abuse issues facing Maine's young people. He was anxious to see the recommendations of the Council on substance abuse issues and stated that he intended to bring the Office of Substance Abuse (OSA) directly into the Governor's office. When asked by a Youth Council member what he intended to do for youth in the state foster care system, the Governor spoke of his plans to merge the Department of Human Services and the Bureau of Developmental Services into one agency and then create a Division of Children and Families. His vision is a service system, which will support children and families with coordinated services that meet their needs. He mentioned

the need for youth input on driving issues and many other public policy decisions that impact Maine youth. He encouraged communication with his office and offered his support.

After a short recess, the Council engaged in a discussion of the process of working with the legislature and the Governor's office during the upcoming session. Nathanael Yellis volunteered to track legislation and committee meetings and public hearings through the legislative web site and inform council members of his findings. Several Council members said they could be available to testify at public hearings. Billy Lane reported that he has been working on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council web site.



The afternoon session was focused on a review of the final draft report and recommendations. The Council added two additional recommendations at this meeting, to include a second Senate member and to coordinate the terms of youth members. Following votes to include those two additional recommendations, the

*House Speaker Patrick Colwell addresses the Council*

Council voted unanimously to accept the final draft report.

The group planned a press conference and presentations to the Senate and the House on their findings around the specific need for youth involvement in OSA, Department of Education and the Secretary of States office, their recommendations for improving and replacing the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey, and other recommendations around community based substance abuse programs.

A substance abuse sub-committee was formed to maintain oversight of the Council recommendations regarding OSA and to represent the collective knowledge on issues related to substance abuse that the council had gathered over the past six months. A request was made to convene a workshop with Secretary of State Dan Gwadosky regarding the recommendations that he will be proposing to the legislature concerning young Maine drivers. The council wants to focus next on the issue of education, jobs and other opportunities for Maine's youth.

## **LYAC Council in a National Context**

During the course of the Council's meetings in 2002, the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service undertook an effort to better understand the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council in a national context and to find out what other states have done with respect to establishing similar youth advisory councils or committees. In conducting that review, the Muskie School found that many national youth experts and policy makers are very interested in Maine's commitment to its young people and in the model of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Many other states felt that the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council represented an authentic youth leadership initiative that has the potential to not only provide a hands on learning opportunity for Maine youth, but also, to provide insightful feedback and direction to Maine policy makers.

The Muskie School found generally that youth development efforts at the state and local level is a relatively new approach to youth work across the country. The general theory on which those youth development efforts are built, generally referred to as a "strengths based" theory, is founded on the assumption that the best way to improve the life of young people is to improve their community. The Muskie School found that the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, and its individual members, fit that theory well and that the youth leadership opportunities not only promote positive youth development but also can result in realistic, cost effective decision making for state policymakers.

To determine what other states have done in this area, the Muskie School conducted an informal e-mail survey of other states to see what, if anything, they had done along these lines and to see if the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council was indeed the first of its type in the country.

The responses to that survey are listed below. As these responses indicate, Maine appears to be the first, and so far the only, state in the nation to establish a Legislative Youth Advisory that consists primarily of youth members, that is permanently

established in statute and that has its own authority to introduce legislation. Some states have youth advisory boards for specific policy areas, such as workforce development and substance abuse, and the state of Missouri has recently created a Children's Cabinet comprised of 45 young people who partner with state agencies and meet regularly with the Governor. The Muskie School's survey showed a wide variety of approaches to formalizing youth input into the policy-making process and the process has provided the Council with an important first step in connecting its own activities to those taking place in other states.

**Table 1. Responses from Other States to an Informal Poll by the Muskie School on Youth Related Activities**

STATE	Does your state have a Youth Legislative Advisory Council?	STATE	Does your state have a Youth Legislative Advisory Council?
Alabama	No	Montana	No - Have considered establishing one - wants information
Alaska	No - Some teachers and students visit the State House	Nebraska	No - Warner Institute for Education and Democracy-internet learning tool about legislature for teachers and students
Arizona	No	Nevada	No - Governors Youth Advisory Board meets four times per year to advise on celibacy.
Arkansas	No - Governors Youth Board to develop drug free youth	New Hampshire	No
California	No - Various local youth boards, no state legislative board	New Jersey	No
Colorado	No	New Mexico	No
Connecticut	No	New York	No - New York States Youth Leadership and Services Council. Goal to link networks together to increase cooperation among organizations to mutually promote positive youth development
<i>Delaware</i>	No	North Carolina	No
<i>Florida</i>	No - Mock Legislature when not in session	North Dakota	No
<i>Georgia</i>	No - Mock Legislature when not in session	Ohio	No
<i>Hawaii</i>	No	Oklahoma	No
<i>Idaho</i>	No	Oregon	No
<i>Illinois</i>	No - State Youth Council for Workforce Development-advise on youth education and workforce development.	Pennsylvania	No
<i>Indiana</i>	No - Youth Development Study Commission - collects data and provide recommendations to general assembly on issues relative to youth development regarding advocacy, service leadership and philanthropy	Rhode Island	No - Mock House and Senate day for students
<i>Iowa</i>	Yes - SIYAC - State of Iowa Youth Action Committee - One year appointment for 23 youth to interact with state policy makers, program of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy	South Carolina	No - Department of Education Youth Advisory Committee for Safe Schools, some youth on Juvenile Justice Board
<i>Kansas</i>	No	South Dakota	No
<i>Kentucky</i>	No	Tennessee	No - Youth on State Board of Education, Regents
<i>Louisiana</i>	No	Texas	No
<i>Maine</i>	Yes - Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council (MLYAC)	Utah	Yes - Governor's Youth Council - Operates in Division of Substance Abuse
<i>Maryland</i>	No	Vermont	No - Two students on State Board of Education
<i>Massachusetts</i>	No	Virginia	No - Three youth members on Juvenile Justice Board
<i>Michigan</i>	No	Washington	Yes - Student Lobby, College student page program
<i>Minnesota</i>	No - Some efforts to create an Office of Youth Policy in a state agency	West Virginia	No
<i>Mississippi</i>	No - Just Girl's State and Boy's State	Wisconsin	No - Students on State Board of Education

## **Findings and Recommendations**

### **Issue 1: Youth involvement in planning and policy development on youth-related matters.**

#### **Discussion**

The Council's discussions during its first six months of existence focused primarily on the State's role in youth-related alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs. Those discussions primarily involved in-depth discussions with the State's Office of Substance Abuse (OSA), which is the single state administrative authority responsible for the planning, development, implementation, regulation, and evaluation of substance abuse services. In that role, OSA is also the principal agent of the State in terms of tracking alcohol and drug use among youth and funding youth-related alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs and service providers.

During its discussions with OSA, the Council learned that OSA's program planning and evaluation procedures were being conducted without the benefit of any significant input from youth.<sup>3</sup> The need for that youth input in the planning and development phase of OSA's programs, however, became demonstrably clear to the Council during its review of OSA's Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS). In reviewing that survey, which is administered biennially in high schools throughout Maine, the Council found several clear areas in which the accuracy, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the survey could improve significantly if the planning process included youth input and review. OSA clearly supported that concept during its discussions with the Council and indicated that efforts to involve youth had taken place in previous years, but that resources within the office and other factors prevented the office from formalizing that input in any meaningful way.

In addition to the obvious benefits from youth involvement with OSA's planning process, the Council also learned during its meeting with Secretary of State Dan Gwadosky that the Secretary's "Young Drivers Task Force", which developed sweeping changes to the youth driving laws in 1998 and 2000, did not include any youth members and did not benefit from the attendance of any youth at meetings of the Task Force. The Council applauds the Secretary of State for his work in this area and for reaching out to the Council for input into additional changes under consideration for the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature. The Council shares the Secretary's observation that youth involvement in that process would be significant.

The Council found it significant that neither of these agencies, OSA or the Secretary of State's Office, had benefited from youth input in the development of programs and laws that significantly affected youth nor had they established any formal internal processes for seeking and obtaining that input from youth when considering policy changes. In many instances, efforts were made to solicit input from youth, but for a number of

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<sup>3</sup> OSA does report that its teams for reviewing bids from local providers of prevention services do "frequently" include some youth members.

reasons those efforts have not resulted in meaningful youth input. For those reasons, the Council believes that the creation of a process to help those agencies obtain youth input at the planning stage or during policy development is critical.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendations regarding youth involvement in planning and policy development on youth-related matters:

**Finding.** The Council finds that, in its experience to date, agencies which are charged with developing programs and policies that directly affect youth appear to have few, if any, formal procedures for obtaining youth input when developing those programs and policies and have historically had little or no youth involvement in the development of those programs and policies. The Council finds that State agencies charged with planning, implementing or enforcing programs or policies that specifically affect youth should include a process for seeking and obtaining youth input.

### ***Recommendations***

*The Council recommends that the Legislature initiate a process that will lead to the creation of a Youth Advisory Committee within the Executive Branch to serve as a resource for state agencies charged with developing, implementing or enforcing programs, policies or laws that apply specifically to youth. The Council further recommends that the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse, the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of Education be tasked with developing recommendations on the structure, function and operations of that Committee and that those agencies jointly report their recommendations to the Council in the fall of 2003.*

*The Council has created a 3-member subcommittee of youth members of the Council to begin immediately to work with OSA, the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of Education on matters pertaining to youth input into agency policy making on matters affecting youth and to assist in the development of the Youth Advisory Committee.*

### **Issue 2: The Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse Survey (MYDAUS)**

#### **Discussion**

The Office of Substance Abuse (OSA) presented information to the Council showing that its budget for prevention program funding is approximately \$8.36 million annually, of which approximately 75% (\$6.3 million) is awarded by OSA to local prevention providers.<sup>4</sup> The \$8.36 million in funding is a mix of state and federal dollars, with approximately \$1.1 million coming from State appropriations and \$7.26 million from

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<sup>4</sup> Based on information provided by the Office of Substance Abuse.

federal funding.<sup>5</sup> The OSA uses a biennial survey tool, the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS), to assess the need for drug and alcohol prevention services and to analyze substance abuse patterns in the State. The results from the MYDAUS survey play an important role in the process leading to the distribution of funding to local programs through OSA's local grant programs by helping the State to identify where the needs are, and in helping the grant applicants justify their needs in their local areas. Although OSA uses other factors in addition to the survey data in making grant award decisions, the survey data is nonetheless an important element in decisions about how and where OSA spends its scarce prevention dollars. OSA also reported that the costs of administering the MYDAUS survey range between \$130,000 to \$150,000 biennially.

The youth members of the Council began their discussion of the MYDAUS survey with the unique perspective of being part of the target population of the survey (youth) and therefore having direct and recent experience with completing the survey questionnaire. Although the Council recognizes the importance to the State of data on drug and alcohol abuse in making decisions about funding prevention programs, the Council also has concerns about the survey tool and the methodology by which the survey is administered. Specifically, the Council feels that the survey tool is too long (137 questions) to retain the attention of most youths, that the organization of the survey leads to frustrations that affect how seriously youth take the exercise and that the "self-selected" manner in which the survey is administered introduces biases into the results that affect the overall accuracy of the survey. For example, the survey population does not include home-schooled students or students who have dropped out of school for whatever reason. In addition, the youth who do complete the survey constitute a "self selected sample", a process that introduces a statistical bias into the results that would be absent if the survey were administered using a stratified random sampling methodology.

The Council spent a considerable amount of time discussing the MYDAUS survey with OSA, including several discussions about options to the current procedures, and understands that the survey tool and methodology currently used by OSA are the result of many factors, some of which may not be entirely within the control of OSA. Nevertheless, the Council is not convinced that the current survey tool and survey methodology used by OSA return the most reliable results or represent the most cost-effective use of the funds budgeted for a survey. The Council believes that OSA's experience in its 2002 survey, in which approximately 10,000 completed surveys were discarded for one reason or other (approximately one out of every five surveys completed), makes the point that significant changes are needed in the process to provide more reliable results and to improve its cost effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> OSA reports that approximately half of its federal funding is expected to run out by 2005.

<sup>6</sup> OSA reports that of the 58,838 surveys "scanned" by the office in its 2002 survey, 2000 surveys were discarded for failing the honesty profile. An additional 7,000 to 8,000 surveys were discarded because they were not scannable for a variety of reasons (they were wrinkled, not filled out with #2 pencils, etc). The percent of discarded and unscannable surveys in 2002 is reported by OSA to be consistent with its experience from previous years.

Although the Council has not conducted a thorough review of how other states are collecting similar data, it has reviewed the process used by Washington State and believes that the Washington State model addresses many of the Council's concerns about the process used in Maine. The Washington State "Healthy Youth Survey" utilizes a random sampling process that collects detailed information on health risk behaviors from a student population that is roughly five times that of Maine for a cost that is approximately the same as the MYSDAUS survey in Maine. The information in Washington State is collected through a random sample of approximately 20,000 students statewide at a cost of \$150,000, and provides not only statistically valid information on statewide use, but also provides detailed information to schools selected to participate in the random sample. The Washington State model includes an option for local school districts that are not among those randomly selected to participate for the survey to "opt in" to the process for a cost of \$1.15 per student.

The Council believes that the Washington State model offers potentially significant benefits to Maine over the existing MYDAUS survey and should be reviewed in more detail by the OSA. A summary of the Washington State "Healthy Youth Survey" is included as an appendix to this report.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendation regarding the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey:

**Finding.** The Council finds that it is of critical importance that information collected by the Office of Substance Abuse on drug and alcohol use among youth be based on a survey instrument that is appropriate for youth, that is developed with youth input, that samples from populations that include youth who attend public and private schools, home-schooled students and youth who attend school infrequently or have dropped out of school, that utilizes a random sampling process to produce statistically valid results at the state and local level and that provides the best information possible within available resources.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for collecting information on drug and alcohol use among youth, including a review of Washington State's "Healthy Youth Survey", and report back to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in the fall of 2003 with recommendations on the following issues:*

- 1. Options to the existing MYDAUS survey tool that include a more appropriate survey tool and a methodology that is based on random sampling methodology that provides statistically valid data at the state level and within participating local school districts; and*
- 2. Expanding the target population of the survey to include not only students who attend school, but also home-schooled students and youth who attend school infrequently or have dropped out of school.*

*In preparing these recommendations, the OSA must meet with and consider the advice of a subcommittee of the Council created for that purpose and must, to the extent possible, seek out other youths to participate in the development of these recommendations. Recommendations provided by OSA must include estimates of the costs anticipated to implement its recommendations.*

### **Issue 3: Teacher training and agency coordination in the survey process**

#### **Discussion**

The Council heard a substantial amount of testimony, primarily from youth, on the apparent lack of training for teachers and other school administrators who are asked to administer the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS) in the schools. Although the testimony provided on this point was somewhat anecdotal, several youth members of the Council agreed, based on their own experience, that teacher training and preparation for the MYDAUS survey was inadequate. Specific comments received by the Council included observations that teachers were unprepared to answer student questions about the survey, that too little time was provided to complete the survey, that little or no notice was given to teachers with respect to when the survey needed to be administered and that procedures for administering the survey often appeared disorganized. It was also noted that these factors often contributed to lessening the students' interest in taking the survey seriously and that the short notice sometime disrupted the classroom schedule for the day, since the survey needed to be "squeezed" into an otherwise full schedule.

The Council recognizes that the administering the OSA survey in schools requires a high degree of coordination and cooperation among the Office of Substance Abuse, the Department of Education and the local school districts. The Council also recognizes the organizational challenges such coordination presents to OSA, as the agency most directly responsible for the survey. The Council also feels strongly, however, that such coordination is essential to the proper administration of MYDAUS, or any successor survey instrument.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendation regarding teacher training and agency coordination in the survey process:

**Finding.** The Council finds that the effectiveness of the MYDAUS survey, as presently administered, or any successor survey, could be improved with additional training for teachers and others who administer the survey instrument and with improved coordination among the OSA, the Department of Education and local school districts.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for preparing and training teachers and others who administer the MYDAUS survey in*

*the schools to ensure that all persons administering the survey are adequately prepared to perform that task. The Council also recommends that the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse, the Commissioner of Education and appropriate representatives of local school districts develop a plan for training and coordinating the administration of the 2004 MYDAUS survey, or any successor survey, and present that plan to the Council in the fall of 2003.*

**Issue 4: Ensuring that prevention grants to local providers are awarded based on demonstrated need and demonstrated program effectiveness**

**Discussion**

The Council benefited considerably from testimony and discussions with a wide range of local drug and alcohol abuse prevention program and service providers. Much of the testimony and discussion was compelling and provided the Council an opportunity to better understand the issues facing local prevention providers and the importance to those providers of grants received from the State through the Office of Substance Abuse (OSA).

Although the Council did not undertake a thorough review of the process used by OSA to solicit grant proposals and award grants, there was conflicting testimony about that process and concern from some Council members that certain criteria, particularly demonstrated local need and demonstrated program effectiveness, were not significant factors in the grant award process. The Council feels strongly that priority for the limited funds available to the State for local grants should go to programs that have the highest demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the areas of greatest need. Although individual Council members have varied opinions about the effectiveness of various prevention programs, the Council was not presented with any information that objectively evaluated the effectiveness of those various programs. The Council feels strongly that, as funds for local prevention grants diminish in the coming years, local programs should be carefully evaluated during the grant process and that the criteria for awarding grants should include a demonstration of program effectiveness and a demonstration of the need so that funds can be directed to those programs that are most effective.

The Council is not prepared at this time to find that the grant award process used by OSA is in need of significant change, but for the above reasons the Council is making the following finding and recommendation to initiate a process to better understand the extent to which prevention grants to local providers are awarded based on demonstrated need and demonstrated program effectiveness:

**Finding.** The Council finds that it is of critical importance that the limited amount of state and federal dollars available for youth-related drug and alcohol use prevention programs be awarded based on demonstrated need and demonstrated program effectiveness.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Office of Substance Abuse review its procedures for awarding grants for youth-related drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and services to ensure that those grants are being awarded to programs with the highest demonstrated level of effectiveness and in those areas of the state having the highest demonstrated need. The Council further recommends that the Office report the findings of its review of those matters to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in the fall of 2003.*

**Issue 5: Prevention programs are the most cost-effective way of reducing substance abuse among youth**

**Discussion**

Throughout the summer and fall of 2002, the Council had the opportunity to meet with many agencies, organizations and individuals involved in all aspects of drug and alcohol abuse among youth and to discuss many aspects of their work and their results. Those meetings included discussions with several representatives of the judicial branch who are directly involved in the Maine Juvenile Drug Court, a number of agencies providing treatment to youths with substance abuse problems and organizations and individuals involved in substance abuse prevention programs.

The Council found that those discussions confirmed their belief that programs that focus on preventing substance abuse are the most effective way for the State to reduce substance abuse among youth. Substance abuse treatment programs are an essential component of serving those youth who have already developed substance abuse problems, and must continue to be funded, however, the Council feels strongly that the best opportunity for the State to have the most impact on reducing substance abuse among youth is to place a strong emphasis on finding and funding effective substance abuse prevention programs.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendation regarding prevention programs:

**Finding.** The Council finds that effective programs directed at preventing drug and alcohol abuse among youth are the most cost effective way to reduce the problem of substance abuse among youth. Continued funding for those programs is critical and should not be reduced. Although the Council is still collecting information on prevention programs in the State, the Council is unanimous in its belief that prevention is the most effective focus of state and local dollars spent on youth-related substance abuse programs and services.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council encourages the Office of Substance Abuse to continue to work with the Council in*

*collecting information on prevention providers and in developing a process to evaluate the effectiveness of those prevention programs.*

**Issue 6: Incorporating an alcohol and drug policy for student athletes into the Learning Results**

**Discussion**

In June of 2001, the AdCare Educational Institute was awarded a grant from the Office of Substance Abuse (OSA) that funded the creation of a youth group charged with developing recommendations on school drug and alcohol policies. The youth group created through this grant, which was subsequently named the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project, issued a report in 2001 on general school alcohol and drug policies and a second report in 2002 focused more specifically on recommendations for a school alcohol and drug policy for student athletes.

The Council feels that the alcohol and drug policy for student athletes proposed by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project in their 2002 represents an excellent model for a code of conduct among student athletes. The Council is not aware of any content standards within the Learning Results that offers the clarity of those recommendations, and believes that the Learning Results should be amended in a way that incorporates the principles of those recommendations into the Learning Results. A copy of the 2002 report of the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project is included as an appendix to this report.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendation regarding alcohol and drug policies for student athletes:

**Finding.** The Council finds that the policies proposed by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project regarding the alcohol and drug policy for student athletes set clear and reasonable standards of conduct for student athletes and should be incorporated in the Learning Results.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Legislature amend the laws governing the statewide system of learning results to incorporate the principles of those alcohol and drug use policies pertaining to student athletes proposed by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project within the content standard pertaining to health and physical education. We further recommend that the code of conduct for student athletes incorporated into the learning results be substantially similar to the code of conduct for student athletes proposed by Youth Empowerment Project.*

## **Issue 7: Project Alert as an alternative to DARE**

### **Discussion**

The Council heard a variety of testimony during its meetings in 2002 regarding the effectiveness of the “Drug Abuse Resistance Education” (DARE) program offered in Maine schools through the Maine State Police. Several members of the Council, having completed the DARE program themselves, were also of differing opinions about the program’s effectiveness.

Although the Council did not investigate in extensive detail how the DARE program was evaluated and what those evaluations showed, several members of the Council feel that at least one program, the “Project ALERT” program, may be a more effective option than DARE in furthering the goals of alcohol and drug abuse prevention.

Project ALERT is a model program that is offered nationally and is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Project ALERT is a research-based drug prevention program for middle grade students, grades 6, 7 and 8; that is designed to be taught in 14 class sessions over a two-year period. According to the Project ALERT website (<http://www.projectalert.best.org>) more than 20,000 teachers in a quarter of the nation’s school districts have participated in the program.<sup>7</sup> The goal of the program is to reduce both the initiation of drug use and the transition to regular use. It focuses on the substances that adolescents are most likely to use first and most widely: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants. The program offers a substantive teacher training component that is designed to help educators fully understand the content, process and goals of Project ALERT, successfully demonstrate key activities in the curriculum, motivate the implementation of Project ALERT with fidelity and increase confidence in ability to teach the curriculum. Project ALERT training is intended for middle grade core teachers and anyone else directly implementing the curriculum in the classroom or who has oversight responsibility.

A copy of the Project ALERT brochure, which was downloaded from the Project ALERT website, is included as an appendix to this report.

For these reasons, the Council makes the following finding and recommendation with respect to considering alternatives to DARE:

**Finding.** The Council finds that alternatives to the “Drug Abuse Resistance Education” (DARE) program offered through the Maine State Police are worth exploring, given some concerns about the effectiveness of the DARE program itself. The Council is not finding that DARE is ineffective, but that other alternatives should be supported and their effectiveness as an alternative to DARE be evaluated. The Council finds that the Project ALERT program offered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is one option worthy of careful consideration as an option to the DARE program.

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<sup>7</sup> Information on the use of this program in Maine was not available at the time this report was prepared.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Department of Education investigate the Project ALERT program, or other similar programs, as an option to the DARE program in Maine schools. A teacher-training program is an important part of any option considered by the Department. The Council further recommends that such options be available statewide through the Learning Results as an alternative to the “Drug Abuse Resistance Education” (DARE) program offered through the Maine State Police and be updated regularly to ensure that the content is current. The Commissioner of Education shall report its progress on this matter to the Council in the fall of 2003.*

## **Issue 8: Changes in membership and terms**

### **Discussion**

The Council on several occasions discussed several options for changing the membership of the Council and amending the terms of Council members in a way that would make the process more inclusive and more efficient. As currently constituted, for example, the Council includes two members of the House of Representatives, but only one member of the Senate. The Council voted unanimously at its meeting on January 14, 2003 to introduce emergency legislation that adds a second Senate member to the Council to balance membership from both chambers of the Legislature. The Council also voted to “rotate” the legislative chair position between the House and Senate members every two years. In addition to these changes in membership and determination of legislative chair, the Council also voted to revise the expiration dates of current youth members in a way that will greatly simplify the appointment process and provide for more consistency within the Council membership. As shown in Appendix F, the current expiration dates for the terms of the youth members are scattered throughout the year. The Council addressed this by voting to have the terms of all current youth members whose terms expire sometime in 2003 to expire on August 30, 2003 and to have the terms of all youth members whose terms expire sometime in 2004 to expire on August 30, 2004. This would maintain the staggered terms established by the Legislature when it created the Council, but would provide a much greater degree of consistency in membership on the Council.

**Finding.** The Council finds that the legislative membership of the Council should consist of two members of the House of Representatives and two members of the Senate and that the position of legislative chair should rotate between the House and Senate members every two years. The Council also finds that the expiration dates for the terms of the youth members should be adjusted so that the terms of half of the youth members expire on August 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

**Recommendation.** *The Legislative Youth Advisory Council recommends that the Legislature quickly adopt emergency legislation proposed by the Council to add a second Senate member to the Council and to adjust the*

*terms of the existing youth members to provide greater consistency in membership and simplicity in the appointment process.*

**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

**Emergency preamble.** **Whereas**, Acts of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas**, the changes in legislative representation on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council must be made at the earliest opportunity; and

**Whereas**, the realignment and coordination of the terms of the youth members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council must happen immediately; and

**Whereas**, the tasks to agencies of state government directed in this Act must take effect immediately in order to allow those tasks to be completed this year; and

**Whereas**, In the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 3 MRSA, §168-A, sub-§ 3 and 4** are amended to read:

**3. Membership.** The council consists of 24 22 voting members and 5 nonvoting members who are Maine residents in accordance with this subsection. In appointing members, the appointing authorities shall consider geographic distribution and shall appoint at least one member from each of the 3 service regions of the Department of Human Services. Members shall serve for terms of 2 years and, if eligible, may be reappointed for subsequent 2-year terms, except that the appointing authorities shall appoint 1/2 of the members first appointed to the council to terms of one year.

A. The President of the Senate shall appoint 10 11 members as follows:

(1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;

(2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter I-A;

(3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located in the State; and

(4) ~~One member~~ Two members of the Senate whose term coincides with the term of office in the Senate.

B. The Speaker of the House shall appoint 11 members as follows:

(1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;

(2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter I-A;

(3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located within the State; and

(4) Two members of the House of Representatives whose terms coincide with their terms of office in the House of Representatives.

C. The members of the Children's Cabinet, established pursuant to Title 5, section 19131, serve ex officio and may not vote.

**4. Chairs.** There is a legislative chair and a youth chair of the Council. The legislative chair shall alternate every two years between the first appointed member of the House of Representatives and the first appointed member of the Senate, beginning in 2003 with the first appointed member of the House of Representatives serving as the legislative chair for the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature. At the first meeting of each calendar year, the members shall elect one of their youth members to serve as cochair ~~the youth chair for a term of one year. The member of the House of Representatives who is the first appointed by the Speaker shall serve as cochair.~~

**Sec. 2. Coordinating the terms of the current youth members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Title 3, section 168-A, the terms of the appointed youth members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council expire on the following dates:

1. Members whose term expires on August 30, 2003 are William Barker, Trevor Bragdon, Paul Brunetti, Elizabeth Comeau, David Heidrich, Barrett Littlefield, Melissa Simones and Alicia Stokes;

2. Members whose terms expire on August 30, 2004 are Molly Feeney, Keith Rollings, Megan Bernard, Britney Dupee, William Lane, Hannah Pennington, Brenwin Soucie and Nathanael Yellis.

The term of persons appointed to replace the two vacancies on the Council that existed as of January 23, 2003 shall expire on August 30, 2004.

**Sec. 3. Executive Branch Youth Advisory Committee.** The Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of State and the Director of the Office of Substance abuse shall develop recommendations for the establishment of a permanent Youth Advisory Committee within the Executive Branch to serve as a resource for any state agency charged with developing, implementing or enforcing programs, policies or laws that apply specifically to youth. The Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of State and the Director of the Office of Substance shall report those recommendations to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, in the fall of 2003.

**Sec. 4. Office of Substance Abuse.** The Director of the Office of Substance Abuse shall:

1. Review the procedures used by the Office for collecting information on drug and alcohol use among youth, including a review of Washington State's "Healthy Youth Survey", and report back to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, in the fall of 2003 with recommendations on the following issues:
  - A. Options to the existing Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey tool that include a more appropriate survey tool and a methodology that is based on random sampling methodology that provides statistically valid data at the state level and within participating local school districts; and
  - B. Expanding the target population of the survey to include not only students who attend school, but also home-schooled students and youth who attend school infrequently or have dropped out of school;
- 2. Review procedures used by the Office for awarding grants for youth-related drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and services to ensure that those grants are being awarded to programs with the highest demonstrated level of effectiveness and in those areas of the state having the highest demonstrated need. The Director shall report the findings of that review of those matters to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, in the fall of 2003.*

**Section 5. Office of Substance Abuse and Department of Education ; review of survey support.** The Director of the Office of Substance Abuse shall review its procedures for preparing and training teachers and others who administer the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey in the schools to ensure that all persons administering the survey are adequately prepared to perform that task. The Director of the Office of Substance Abuse and the Commissioner of Education shall, in coordination with appropriate representatives of local school districts, develop a plan for training and coordinating the administration of the 2004 Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey, or any successor survey, and present that plan to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, in the fall of 2003.

**Sec. 6. Department of Education .** The Commissioner of the Department of Education shall review the Project ALERT program, and other similar prevention programs, and prepare recommendations on the viability of those programs as options to the “Drug Abuse Resistance Education” (DARE) program in Maine schools. The Commissioner shall include a teacher-training program as part of any recommended option considered by the Department. Options recommended by the Commissioner must be available statewide and available through the Learning Results as an alternative to the (DARE) program offered through the Maine State Police. The Commissioner shall present those recommendations to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, in the fall of 2003.

**Sec. 7. Review of Content Standards in the Learning Results.** As part of the review of the content standards and performance indicators required under Title 20-A, section 6209, subsection 4, the Commissioner of Education shall determine if the content standards pertaining to health and physical education adequately incorporate the principles and goals of the alcohol and drug use policies for student athletes as proposed in the 2002 report by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project. The Commissioner must propose changes to those content standards if the Commissioner determines as a result of that review that the content standards do not adequately incorporate those principles and goals. The Commissioner shall present the results of that review and those recommendations to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, established in Title 3, section 169-A, following the completion of that review.

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, the Act takes effect when approved.

## SUMMARY

This bill implements the recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. The bill does the following:

1. Requires the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of State and the Director of the Office of Substance abuse to develop recommendations for the establishment of a permanent Youth Advisory Committee within the Executive Branch to serve as a resource for any state agency charged with developing, implementing or enforcing programs, policies or laws that apply specifically to youth;
2. Requires the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse to review the procedures used by the Office for collecting information on drug and alcohol use among youth, including a review of Washington State’s “Healthy Youth Survey”, and to report back to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council on options to the existing Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey tool that include a more appropriate survey tool and a methodology that is based on random sampling methodology that provides statistically valid data at the state level and within participating local school districts and expanding the target population of the survey to include not only students who attend school, but also home-

schooled students and youth who attend school infrequently or have dropped out of school.

3. Requires the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse to review procedures used by the Office for awarding grants for youth-related drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and services to ensure that those grants are being awarded to programs with the highest demonstrated level of effectiveness and in those areas of the state having the highest demonstrated need;
4. Requires the Director of the Office of Substance Abuse and the Commissioner of Education to review and report on procedures for preparing and training teachers and others who administer the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey in the schools to ensure that all persons administering the survey are adequately prepared to perform that task;
5. Requires the Commissioner of the Department of Education to review the Project ALERT program, and other similar prevention programs, and prepare recommendations on the viability of those programs as options to the "Drug Abuse Resistance Education" (DARE) program in Maine schools;
6. Requires the Commissioner of Education , as part of the required review of content standards and performance indicators under the Learning Results, shall determine if the content standards pertaining to health and physical education adequately incorporate the principles and goals of the alcohol and drug use policies for student athletes as proposed in the 2002 report by the Youth Policy and Empowerment Project;
7. Adds a second Senate member to the Council and provides for the legislative chair to alternate every two years between the first appointed House member and the first appointed Senate member; and
8. Adjusts the terms of the existing youth members to provide greater consistency in membership and simplicity in the appointment process.